

that reason alone, I ask that this amendment be adopted by my colleagues.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I reserve my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chairman, I would ask my esteemed colleague if he has any speakers prepared to draw attention to this amendment? Otherwise, I think that we ought to close with acceptance of this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I reserve my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Chairman, I would ask that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle come together in unity on this and accept this proposal that seeks to provide that we don't have discriminatory practices that go on within our Department of Transportation.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

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Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Either this is not a serious amendment or it is an exceedingly serious amendment. This amendment is either totally unnecessary or it has a really nefarious purpose. We do have rules and regulations, I think, that might come under the material of the legislation that support and require certain set-asides for minority or women-owned businesses in providing among all of our contracting in transportation departments, in some of those departments, and under certain circumstances. I think those are entirely appropriate.

I don't know whether this is the sort of thing that the gentleman was trying to get at, but I think that this has some entirely unknown effects. Perhaps I should have asked the gentleman whether he had particular things in mind that he knew about because I couldn't at first think of any.

Mr. Chairman, my chairman says I should accept the amendment, and I am going to accept the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLVER. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) for a colloquy.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to engage in a colloquy with the chairman of the subcommittee. The chairman has been a long-time advocate in improving safety standards in our Nation's transpor-

tation system. I appreciate his willingness to include report language regarding occupant ejection and motor coach and school bus standards in this legislation.

In March, a horrific accident occurred in my district when a bus carrying the Bluffton University men's baseball team crashed on Interstate 75 in Atlanta, Georgia, en route to a tournament in Florida. Six people were killed and 29 others were injured.

That week, Dr. Jeffrey Solomone from Grady Hospital's trauma center, where most of the victims were treated in Atlanta, called my office outraged. He knew that their deaths could have been prevented if they were simply wearing seat belts. Imagine working to save young lives when you knew their injuries were caused not from impact but from being thrown from the vehicle.

Last year, two teenage girls were killed in a similar accident in Beaumont, Texas. Advocates and family members accurately highlighted that the National Transportation Safety Board recommended that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration develop a safety standard in 1999.

In 2005, the SAFETEA-LU legislation reiterated this request and called for a national standard to be developed no later than October 1, 2009. I applaud the committee for demanding a status report on these standards. Simply said, it should not take 10 years to figure out a way to save lives. How much longer must we wait until a simple regulation is developed?

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I want to assure the gentleman from Georgia that this and other important safety standards are the utmost priority of the committee, as they have been all of the years I have served on, earlier, the Transportation Subcommittee and now the Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee.

Occupant ejection prevention is critical to saving lives. Motor coach and school bus accidents are not necessarily commonplace, but when these tragedies occur, they shake the Nation to its core. The committee highlighted that motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for young Americans, and strong safety standards are the cornerstone to protecting American lives.

I appreciate the gentleman's attention to this issue, and I remain committed, as will the committee, to ensuring that NHTSA meets this and subsequent deadlines to develop national standards that save lives in an expeditious manner.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. I look forward to continuing to work with the gentleman to make sure that we do not have to wait until the last possible moment in 2009 for changes to be made.

I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts and his staff for working so hard on this legislation and making a commitment to safety and security on America's roads.

Mr. OLVER. I would just comment it should be possible to get out this kind of regulation earlier than October 1, 2009. We will see what we can do about that.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I wish to continue the colloquy with the gentleman from Georgia on an additional subject, and I continue to yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I come to the floor to compliment the chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, Mr. OLVER, on preparing an excellent and well-balanced appropriation bill.

The large number of important priorities included in this bill create difficult choices, and the chairman has done an excellent job balancing the competing interests and preparing a good bill for consideration in the full House.

As the co-Chair of the House COPD Caucus, I want to speak about one item that falls under the jurisdiction of the subcommittee, and that is the implementation of the 1986 Air Carrier Access Act. This act was intended to protect individuals with disabilities who fly on commercial air carriers from discriminating practices. The legislation has done a reasonably good job of protecting most passengers.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from Massachusetts has expired.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Wisconsin is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OBEY. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS).

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. I thank the chairman for yielding.

While the legislation has done a reasonably good job of protecting most passengers with disabilities, it has had limited success in influencing air carriers to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals who require supplemental oxygen.

Currently, as an example, air carriers have the authority to allow or disallow the use of portable oxygen systems aboard their planes even when the Department of Transportation and the FAA find that the systems are safe. This leaves the use of oxygen systems supplied by the carrier. Potential layovers and delays between flights are an additional health risk and barrier to access to air flight.

In September 2005, the Department of Transportation recognized this problem and issued a notice of proposed rulemaking to clarify this situation to assist the flying public who are in need of assisted breathing devices.

Mr. Chairman, I come to the floor to commend the Department of Transportation for recognizing the problem and for issuing this proposed rule. The final rule will provide uniform standards that will allow passengers to carry